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BOOK REVIEW: DEFINING THE ESSENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Students and teachers of human consciousness abound. When in the 1950s Robert Monroe began his journeys out of the body, he was hard pressed to find someone who could offer the kind of guidance he sought. Not so these days. Our challenge lies in evaluating the plethora of available resources and identifying those that best serve our needs. One such resource is prolific British author and philosophy professor Mark Rowlands.

Wikipedia introduces Rowlands as "a peripatetic professional philosopher who achieved widespread fame for his critically acclaimed autobiography, *The Philosopher and the Wolf*, published by Granta in 2008. This is the story of a decade of his life … spent living and travelling with a wolf and the philosophical reflections that resulted from [the experience]. As a professional philosopher, Rowlands is known as one of the principal architects of the view known as vehicle externalism or the extended mind, and also for his work on the moral status of animals."

Among Rowlands' many scholarly papers that speak to our collective investigation into the nature of consciousness—or in this case, phenomenal consciousness—is "Consciousness: The transcendentalist manifesto," published in 2004 in the journal *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* by Springer Netherlands. From the abstract published on SpringerLink: "Consciousness, it will be argued, is not an empirical but a transcendental feature of the world. That is, what it is like to have an experience is not something of which we are aware in the having of that experience, but an item in virtue of which the genuine (non-phenomenal) objects of our consciousness are revealed as being the way they are."

Our attention was also captured by Rowlands' 2001 book, *The Nature of Consciousness*, published by Cambridge University Press. Reviewer Ion Georgiou on MentalHelp.net says of *The Nature of Consciousness* that it is "a book filled with scholarly argument, well-developed—but also well-defined—complex jargon, [an] excellent critique of all the previous important works of the field (thought experiments included) and written by a philosophy lecturer. This book is required reading not only for those wanting to get to grips with what is going on in consciousness studies, but for those who are dissatisfied with the current accounts which, as Rowlands points out, tend to base themselves on an objectualist thesis."

A complete bibliography of Mark Rowlands' published books and papers can be seen on his website.

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